SARTINE ISLAND ECOLOGICAL RESERVE

PURPOSE STATEMENT

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Approved by:

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Date:

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SARTINE ISLAND ECOLOGICAL RESERVE
Purpose Statement

Ecological reserves are areas selected to preserve representative and special natural ecosystems, plant and animal species, features and phenomena. The key goal of ecological reserves is to contribute to the maintenance of biological diversity and the protection of genetic materials. All consumptive resource uses and the use of motorized vehicles are prohibited. **Sartine Island Ecological Reserve is closed to the public to protect the nesting birds and their habitat.**

Primary Role
The **primary** role of Sartine Island Ecological Reserve is to protect internationally important nesting sites and terrestrial habitat for breeding birds, many of which are rare and endangered. Together with Triangle Island Ecological Reserve and Beresford Island Ecological Reserve, it represents the single most important seabird area in Pacific Canada. This highly productive marine region off the northern tip of Vancouver Island is home to an estimated 55% of the world's population of Cassin's auklets. Sartine Island itself has the second largest Cassin's auklet colony in the world. Other migratory seabirds, including common murres, Brandt's cormorants, tufted puffins, glaucous-winged gulls, pelagic cormorants, black oystercatchers, pigeon guillemots, petrels, albatross and shearwaters utilize the area for critical breeding, nesting, and marine foraging habitat. Given the sensitivity of seabird nesting and foraging sites, this reserve is closed to public access.

In addition to being important to seabirds, the island supports an endemic race of deer mouse and haul-out sites for the endangered northern sea lion.

Secondary Role
The **secondary** role is to protect special natural values and features. Extreme weather conditions, isolation, and the physical environment have created an environment that supports plant communities which are both unique in composition and expression. The island is treeless and has few shrubs – it is dominated by a herb layer of dune wildrye grass.

Sartine Island contributes to the representation of the Vancouver Island Shelf *Terrestrial* Ecosection (VIS) which between Beresford, Sartine, Triangle, Lanz and Cox Islands (collectively known as the Scott Islands), is almost entirely protected. These islands also contribute to the protection of the Vancouver Island Shelf *Marine* Ecosection (VIS), which is poorly represented in the protected areas system at 5.4%.

Management Issues

Known Management Issue	Response
Impacts of maintenance of the Environment Canada weather station (i.e. introduction of contaminants and exotic species, disturbance of birds by helicopters, impacts on burrows and eggs)	➢ Reinforce precautionary principle with no-trace maintenance activities. ➢ Monitor and enforce permit. ➢ Ensure mutual understanding with Environment Canada of the significance of the values.
Lack of knowledge and awareness of cultural values	➢ Undertake cultural inventory of ecological reserve in conjunction with First Nations.
Impacts of visitation on cultural and natural values	➢ In conjunction with First Nations, develop interpretative program offsite. ➢ Enhance relations with other jurisdictions. ➢ Encourage more formal monitoring and reporting system. ➢ Recruit a volunteer ecological reserve warden.

Conservation

Representation - ecosection	☒	Sartine Island Ecological Reserve is the 3rd largest contributor (1.58%) to the representation of the Vancouver Island Shelf *Terrestrial* Ecosection (VIS). This ecosection is almost entirely protected (99.66%) by 7 protected areas. Lanz and Cox Islands Park is the major contributor (91.28%). Sartine Island is part of the Scott Islands Group which has a total of 4,076 hectares of foreshore. The Scott Islands are the 4th largest contributor out of 28 protected areas to the representation of the Vancouver Island Shelf *Marine* Ecosection, which has only 5.39% protected provincially.
- biogeoclimatic subzone/variant	☐	Sartine Island Ecological Reserve makes a very minimal contribution (0.04%) to CWHvh1, which is well represented in the province at 19.3%.
Special Features	☒	Unique plant communities, seabird colonies, sea lions, endemic deer mouse.
Rare/Endangered Values	☒	*Red-listed species*: northern sea lion; common murre; and Brandt's cormorant. *Blue-listed species*: Cassin's auklet; tufted puffin, and hairy goldfields. *Yellow-listed species of conservation concern (S4)*: pelagic cormorant and black oystercatcher. *COSEWIC-listed Threatened*: Northern abalone.
Scientific/Research Opportunities	☒	Breeding birds/sea lions

Recreation

Representation		
backcountry	☐	Not Applicable
destination	☐	Not Applicable
travel corridor	☐	Not Applicable
local recreation	☐	Not Applicable
Special Opportunities	☐	Not Applicable
Education/Interpretation Opportunities	☒	Breeding birds – offsite

Cultural Heritage

Representation	☐	Values unknown
Special Feature	☐	None known at this time

Other Management Considerations

Other Designations	☒	Important Bird Area (International program that identifies and supports the protection of lands having special bird habitats); potential Marine Protected Area with federal-provincial partnership.
Relationship to other PAs	☒	Part of a system of protected areas focused on bird breeding areas on the west coast of British Columbia. Part of Scott Island Group.
Co-operative Management Arrangements	☐	Not Applicable
Partnerships	☐	Not Applicable
Vulnerability	☒	Susceptible to oil spills, disturbance from boats and planes, feral rabbits, invasive species, offshore drilling, possible shipwrecks and the subsequent introduction of rats. A natural threat is the possibility of a tsunami given the geographical location.
Relationship to other Strategies	☒	Canadian Wildlife Service is undertaking a Marine Wildlife Area planning process to protect the foraging area of the seabirds. Part of the Marine Protected Areas Strategy.

Area: 1,091 hectares (30 ha upland; 1,061 ha foreshore)

Date of establishment: May 4, 1971. The foreshore component was added in 1995.